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Man and the atom

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A locomotive consumes two tons of coal for every seventy miles it travels. A motor car uses up a gallon of petrol every twenty to forty miles. But when just twelve pounds of uranium is converted into atomic energy, it can send a high-speed rocket soaring 40,000 miles into space. Whatever the performance, each type of fuel must undergo a drastic change to produce the energy required. Coal and petrol are burnt, but for atomic energy to be produced, the atom – the smallest portion of an element which can take part in a chemical reaction – has to be smashed. Far from being destroyed, it is transformed into the most powerful form of energy ever known to mankind.

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What the atom is to matter, man is to society, in terms of his being its basic structural unit. When his destruction, or ruination takes place, it is like matter being converted into energy: inner forces are released in him, just as nuclear energy is generated when the atom is smashed. Defeat has a galvanizing rather than a destructive effect, resulting in greater activity, greater resolve and a heightened sense of purpose. The individual concerned draws upon latent energy to win back what he has lost and to rise to even greater heights. His hidden potential manifests itself with tremendous vigour just as nuclear energy is released when an atomic explosion takes place. The spirit which rises within him is invincible, and nothing can arrest his advance. Like a river flowing to the sea, he surmounts every obstacle in a tireless pursuit of his goal.